

Two Nanaimo-area teams recognized for their work improving children's health and wellness services

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on behalf of Island Health

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The Canadian Social Pediatrics Award for Advancing RICHER Interprofessional and Intersectoral Partnerships – given by the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada and the Canadian Pediatric Society Social Pediatrics Interest Group – was presented to the teams behind:

- Development and sustaining the Wellness Centres at John Barsby and the Nanaimo Aquatic Centre Wellness Centre (NAC)
- In School Pediatric Consultation Service (Seeing the Invisible Children)

The award is for working towards improving children's rights in ways that encourage love for children, listening to children, fostering healthy children's lives, and building capacities in children, in the spirit of [Doctor Korczak](#).

"It is truly an honour for us to receive the award," says Dr. Wilma Arruda, Paediatrician at Island Health. "Social Pediatrics is an emerging model of providing health and wellness care to children and youth. It is a holistic approach to care for the child, youth and their family."

"Both of these programs provide much needed service to the most marginalized children youth and their families. I am grateful for the professionalism, dedication, and persistence of the teams while delivering compassionate effective care to the children and youth we see."

The John Barsby Wellness Centre and the Nanaimo Aquatic Centre Wellness Centre were created out of a broad community partnership led by Dr. Arruda. The collaboration of Island Health Public Health, School District 68 and the Nanaimo Division of Family Practice has made these programs successful.

The Wellness Centres address the unique needs of youth in our community and, in particular, those youth who are not attached to primary care and are not having their health and wellness needs met.

The Wellness Centres allow youth to build trust and resilience in the medical system. The youth are supported to increase their capacity and confidence in building wellness, preventing illness, managing their health and practising self-care.

The John Barsby Wellness Centre has been supporting youth in John Barsby Secondary School since 2015. With the kind support of the City of Nanaimo the Nanaimo Aquatic Centre Wellness Centre provides opportunities for youth from anywhere in the community to access services.

The Wellness Centres are staffed by Public Health Nursing and Primary Care Physicians with support from Child Youth Mental Health and Discovery Youth and Family Substance Use Services Clinicians.



From left: Nicole Rock, admin's assistant; Melinda Gillingham, PHN; Erin Kenning, PH Nurse and Clinical Coordinator; and Dr. Wilma Arruda.

The second Initiative is a consultation service Arruda provides to students and families in Elementary Schools. "Seeing the Invisible Children" focuses on providing pediatric care to children and their families who live in marginalized circumstances, who are not attached to a Primary Care Practitioner, and who may have difficulty navigating the medical system.

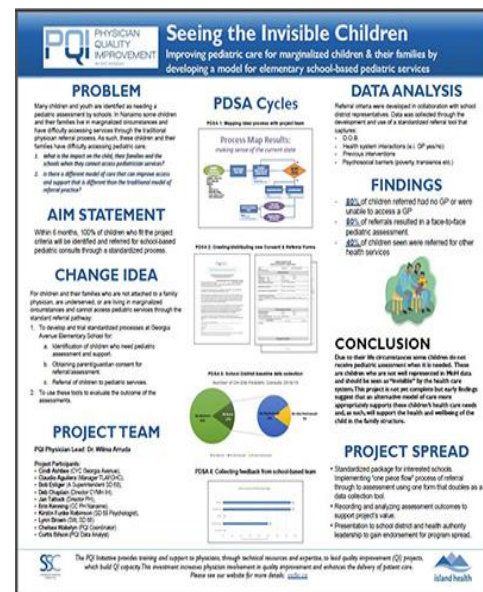
This work is done in partnership with the School District and partnerships with Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre. Arruda also provides a similar service at their Health Centre. The program provides service to children who would not otherwise have their health needs met.



From left: Dr. Arruda and Pleasant Valley Elementary School Principal Diane McGonigle, who was crucial in helping to get the program running.

Click on image for more info about the program:

The award was presented at a Zoom ceremony in December to:
 The Wellness Centres at John Barsby and the Nanaimo Aquatic Centre Wellness Centre (NAC) team:
 Dr. Wilma Arruda – Medical Director
 Erin Kenning - Public Health & Nursing Support Services Coordinator
 Maria Devesa – Public Health Nurse
 Douglas Hardie – Discovery Youth Services
 Kathryn Atkinson, MCFD CYMH Team Lead
 Dr. Marcia Fukunaga - Medical Lead and Family Physician
 Dr. Sandy Barlow – Medical Lead and Family Physician
 And all supporting nurses, counsellors and physicians who work in the Centres.



And the In School Pediatric Consultation Service “Seeing the Invisible Children” team:
 Dr Wilma Arruda – Pediatrician
 Cindi Ashbee - Child, Youth Care, Georgia Avenue Elementary School
 Claudio Aguilera - Manager Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre Health Centre
 Bob Eslinger- Assistant Superintendent SD 68 (retired)
 Jan Tatlock – previous Director Public Health, Island Health
 Erin Kenning - Clinical Coordinator Public Health Nanaimo
 Kirstin Funke Robinson - SD 68 Psychologist
 Lynn Brown - Social Worker, SD 68